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CLOSING OF THE SHOWA ERA

In facing the closing of the Showa era, the National Christian Council in Japan sends supplications to its brothers and sisters in Christ through an evaluation of the meaning of "the emperor's reign" as manifested from the Meiji era to the present. This is done in the spirit of confessing our sins committed against neighboring countries in Asia and the Pacific and through a clarification of war responsibility in relation to our sisters and brothers in the Lord.

On the basis of our faith, churches, Christian organizations and individual Christians of Japan must inform themselves as to the problems of the emperor system and examine the manifestations of said system as these express themselves in daily life. One of the greatest mistakes of the past, committed by the churches in Japan, was generated by ignoring the abiding problems created and sustained by the emperor system.

Therefore we are inalterably opposed to all attempts to nationalize the Shinto religion organized as it is under the emperor as its highest priest, and refuse to participate in any Shinto ceremonies created by the Japanese nation upon the occasion of the present emperor's death. We must be very wary of any activities directed by violent prone dominant power groups which seek to strengthen any of the taboos created out of the emperor system in Japan and we must express an unwillingness to cooperate with any activities which are related to such ceremonies.

We appeal for the full enjoyment of a total freedom of assembly, association, thought, speech, press, and religion for

all peoples. Attempted violations of such inviolable rights must be viewed critically whether such attempts are based on acts of violence or other more subtle forms of coercion.

The modernization of Japan, which began with the Meiji Restoration in 1868, was the beginning of "the Imperial Era" of Japan. The basic principle of the Meiji Constitution of 1889 was established around "the holiness of the Emperor and his inviolability" and as stated in Article 4: "The Emperor is the head of the Empire, combining in himself all rights of sovereignty." He was also made the commander-in-chief of Japanese military forces and retained the power of war initiation and negotiated settlements. This unitary imperial sovereign power over the State was and is the hallmark warp and woof of Japan's modern history.

The international relationships established during Japan's modern history, particularly Japan's military invasion of other Asian and Pacific nations, were nothing more than an attempted expansion of the Emperor's control over the rest of the world. The occupation of Taiwan, the annexation of Korea, the invasion of China and other Asian and Pacific countries were all carried out within this framework. At the same time through these national and international imperial conspiracies, systems of discrimination and oppression were established and the freedoms of speech, assembly, thought, press, and faith were violated and removed in lieu of the "sovereign rights" of the emperor.

During these times churches in Japan did not take a polemic or prophetic role, but rather, by following the orders of the state, became accomplices to state power and evil national policies. By not accepting the few Christians in our midst who stood up against these misguided national policies out of their alternate

understanding of the mission of the Church, most Japanese churches left to destruction those who were struggling to guard peace and human rights. We must remember this fact with repentance as we confess our sins against God and our neighbors.

Throughout the forty three year period after World War II the emperor system has been slowly reestablished on the basis of Chapter I Article 1 of the present constitution in which "The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people..." This retention of the emperor system by the present constitution was one of the conditions laid down for Japan's surrender to Allied Forces forty three years ago, and as such clearly indicates the reality of a deeply imbedded emperor system which plagues Japanese society even today.

"The sovereignty of the emperor" is not part of traditional Japanese culture, but rather its purpose and role is the maintenance of social and political control over the people of Japan in a vertically arranged social system and through the daily practice of discrimination and oppression which renders people compliant to state rule.

Replacing the military invasions into other countries of past years, Japan came into huge profitability through the wars in Korea and Vietnam. With this as a basis, Japan once again began and continues a highly exploitative economic invasion of other countries. The basis of this present brand of structural international discrimination and oppression is the emperor system which remains taboo in Japan and therefore free from any criticism within Japanese society. Such means that any criticisms of Japanese national policies in this regard become targets of violence and repression.

However, led by the Gospel, we must confront boldly the taboo which hides the emperor system from criticism and overcome it. Today the freedoms given by God and the human rights of all peoples in Japanese society must be guaranteed and we pray for the coming of a new era in which we commit ourselves to the welfare of

humankind and to peace in the world. Particularly, we pray for the Lord's justice and peace among the peoples of Asia and the Pacific and we will make every effort to bring about the true meanings of reconciliation.

May the Creator of history and our Lord guide us through His leading hand so that we can bring about the transformation of Japanese history. (September 1, 1988)

Rev. Kentaro Takeuchi, Moderator

Rev. Munetoshi Maejima, General Secretary

Adopted by the NCCJ Third Central Committee

JAPAN ANTI-APARTHEID EFFORTS

Under the sponsorship of the Japan Anti-Apartheid Committee and in cooperation with the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid, twenty different groups in Japan including the NCC/J Anti-Apartheid Committee organized the first Anti-Apartheid Asia-Oceania Regional Workshop as held August 27-30 in Tokyo. Delegates from South African Liberation Movements and other concerned organizations brought sixteen participants from nine different countries, including the Rev. James Mutambirwa of the World Council of Churches' Programme to Combat Racism, into discussions with fifty Japanese delegates and observers.

The group issued a declaration at the closing of the meeting, in which the following aims are stated:

1. To discuss the growing economic, political and cultural relations between South Africa and the East Asian economies of Japan, Taiwan, Korea and Hong Kong.
2. To express ways of enhancing the cooperation and joint action of Anti-Apartheid organizations in Asia-Oceania.
3. To draw up concrete proposals for common action to support the struggle against apartheid and for the liberation of the peoples of South Africa.

Africa and Namibia.

4. To share each others' problems and aspirations and to express solidarity with one another.

The workshop states:

1. As a primary principle apartheid is a crime against humanity; and any countries and peoples who collaborate with apartheid are accomplices to this same crime.
2. Our main objective is the imposition of comprehensive mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa. If sanctions are not effectively imposed, the apartheid system will be prolonged and its aggression and terrorism in South Africa, Namibia and throughout the Southern African region will increase.
3. It is vital that the UN arms embargo against South Africa should be implemented strictly and that those who violate it should be exposed and condemned. All military and nuclear collaboration with the apartheid regime should be ended.
4. We resolve especially to expose the close and vital military and nuclear collaboration between Taiwan-Israel and South Africa and will campaign to stop it.
5. Japan, the United Kingdom, the USA and West Germany are trading partners of South Africa and their governments are the most aggressive in their opposition to sanctions. This is despite the overwhelming public support for sanctions implementation in these countries. We pledge to organize special campaigns in our respective countries against the trading roles of these countries as part of a worldwide campaign to secure effective sanctions.
6. East Asian economies, especially Japan, Taiwan, Korea, and Hong Kong are involved in expanding trade with South Africa when certain other countries are imposing sanctions. We demand that they stop helping the

apartheid regime by acting as sanctions busters and thereby undermining those sanction measures which have been imposed by the US Congress, the EEC, the Commonwealth and Nordic countries.

7. We have all agreed to maintain close contact between the groups whose representatives have attended the workshop. We shall also extend contact to other concerned NGOs in the region, particularly regional organizations. In order to realize the objective of close contact, we intend to set up a network organization, which shall exchange information about the activities of those governments and businesses which have ties with South Africa.
8. The exchanges of information should be followed by joint action to end the ties of governments and companies which maintain links with South Africa. Particular attention will be paid to the regional intensification of the international boycott campaign against Shell.
9. In addition there will be other joint actions such as:
 - a. Campaigning for the release of Mandela and all other political prisoners in South Africa and Namibia.
 - b. Intensification of the campaign to stop the execution of the Sharpeville 6 and other patriots on death row.
 - c. Campaigning for prisoner of war status to be conferred on all captured freedom fighters in accordance with the Geneva Convention.
10. The network should also exchange information about racist activities and anti-human rights activities which take place within each country in the region. We can then support each other through international actions designed to expose and eliminate racism and human rights violations. We affirm our opposition

to all forms of colonialism in the region and support the genuine aspirations of indigenous peoples.

11. The participants extend their wholehearted support to the SWAPO in its struggle for the liberation of Namibia. We are especially heartened that recent developments in that region show the vulnerability of the racist regime. After their recent celebration of Namibia Day we look forward to next year's celebration marking the establishment of a free and independent Namibia.

12. Since we recognize collaboration with apartheid as accessory to crime and the need for joint action, the workshop participants agree to:

- a. Condemn the Japanese government and companies which have allowed Japan to become South Africa's largest trading partner;
- b. To undertake joint protest action focusing on Japanese government offices, including trade promotion offices (JETRO). As a first step this will be done throughout the Asia and Oceania region.

We add that the Japanese and Taiwanese participants in the workshop feel very ashamed to be called 'honorary whites' and they insist on rejecting the shameful title.

13. We hope to organize a follow-up meeting in the near future, following consultation with concerned people, to sustain our interaction and cooperation. The next meeting should be a broader one that will draw the participation of people and organizations committed to the destruction of apartheid and the triumph of justice.

14. In conclusion the workshop participants hail the heroic struggles and determination of the people of South Africa and Namibia, and salute the Governments and peoples of the Frontline states in

their resolute support of national liberation struggles in that region. We pledge to continue our co-operation in the support of the struggle against the abhorrent system of apartheid.

Tokyo Celebrates Mandela's 70th Birthday

A rally in honor of Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday was held on July 16 at Tokyo's Yamate Church. Mandela, one of the founders of the African National Congress (ANC), has been imprisoned on South Africa's Robbin Island for over 26 years and has become the world's most famous prisoner and a symbol of the anti-apartheid movement worldwide.

He is serving a life sentence for attempting to end white rule in South Africa. The South African Government rejected the many international pleas calling for Mandela's release and a ban was instituted on birthday celebrations. The program featured talks given by representatives from the Japan Anti-Apartheid committee, Asia, Africa, Latin America Solidarity Committee, and the Japan Socialist Party. Keynote addresses were also given by the Nigerian Ambassador and the African National Congress (ANC) representative to Japan. A vivid documentary was shown entitled "Anvil and Hammer"; this included interviews with Anti- Apartheid movement leaders and film footage depicting the repressive nature of the South African Government.

Mr. Jerry Matsila, the ANC representative called upon the Japanese Government to take the following steps: renounce the "honorary white" label which has been bestowed upon them by the South African Government; generate legislation against South Africa; ensure that the Ministry of Trade and Industry uses its power in trade honorably - against arrests and injustices; and that Japanese industry stop supplying cars to the South African police force.

Mr. Matsila stated that these actions should be taken for the "sake of human compassion, for life and nothing else".

He called upon the Japanese Government to negotiate with the ANC on the side of the oppressed. The members of the Japan Anti-Apartheid Committee are calling for a general boycott of all South African goods as a means of pressuring the South African Government to end its policy of apartheid. The committee lists the main goods being imported from South Africa as: gold, diamonds, Appletiser (apple juice), Nederburg wine, and canned fruits. These are distributed through Japanese firms.

The NCC/J General Assembly in March 1988 passed a resolution in opposition to the system of apartheid in South Africa. Responding to this resolution the NCC/J formed an anti-apartheid action committee and hopes to work closely with the broader anti-apartheid movement in Japan.

(by: Liann Ainsworth)

STATEMENT ISSUED BY
THE MOST REV. DESMOND TUTU
ANGLICAN ARCHBISHOP OF CAPE TOWN
ON THE BOMBING OF THE SOUTH-AFRICAN
COUNCIL OF CHURCHES HEADQUARTERS
AUGUST 31, 1988

Today's bombing of Khotso House represents a new low in the behavior of those who seek to destroy the witness of the church.

We have no doubt that this act was committed by the perpetrators or supporters of apartheid. The South African Council of Churches has long been a target of the enemies of peace precisely because of its own strong commitment to the struggle for justice and peace.

But the evil people who carried out this despicable bombing must know that they will never deter the church from its commitment to non-violent methods of transforming South African society. I condemn the violence of this bombing and I invite the South African government to likewise condemn it. I also challenge the rash of pro-government, minority church groups which have sprung up in recent months to condemn this violence with the same vehemence they employ against the non-violent tactics of sanctions. I express the Anglican Church's solidarity with the Rev. Frank Chikane, General

Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, his staff and all those who work in Khotso House.

BAPTIST UNION PEACE STATEMENT

Under the theme "Following the Lord in Mission" the Japan Baptist Union Thirty-First General Assembly was held August 25-27 at the Kanto Gakuin University Hayama Seminar House. "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.." (Acts:1:8) was the sub-theme. The following "Peace Appeal" and "Appeal on 'The Yasukuni Shinto Shrine Issue" were adopted by the Assembly.

Peace Appeal

"God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:19)

Today, 43 years after World War II the vision of peace which was built upon the manifold sacrifices of so many people in war, the unified cries for peace in one great voice; "Never let us repeat war again", and the reevaluation of Japan's mistakes and failures have been pushed away into the some distant yore.

The national system of human organization with the Emperor on top was strengthened when the military budget went over the one percent of the GNP ceiling. Openly, Japanese government cabinet members go to "worship" at the Yasukuni Shrine which is the national symbol of Japanese militarism. Japan's flag, which once became the symbol of the invasion of other countries, is now used in the public school system to measure loyalty to the State.

Particularly, the proposed revisions to the present constitution, changes in public school textbooks and movements to establish a National Secrets Law, all point to the dangers haunting peace and democracy in Japan today.

Under present world conditions the

destruction of the world environment by northern hemisphere nations in the pursuit of profits increases the extreme deprivation, starvation and poverty of southern hemisphere nations. Unless we learn to share the limited resources of the world and live in mutually guaranteed peace there will be no future for humankind. When will we awaken from the evil dream of basing our lives and trust on the preponderance of nuclear weapons while we are faced with the ultimate removal of humanity from the face of the earth? Tomorrow is too late!

As Christians, our task is to take up the burden with those who are struggling for the restoration of life, for greater respect for humanity, and for freedom, even as they are burdened by and suffer from poverty and oppression under the inhumane treatment resulting from Japan's economic invasion of Asia.

In order to be Peacemakers (Matt. 5:9) we propose that:

1. Each and every church begin experiencing peacemaking.
2. Each and every church solidify their relationships with other churches and organizations whose aims are the promotion of peace in the world.

Appeal on the 'Yasukuni Shrine' Issue:

Although Japan's constitution requires separation of state and religion and though the majority of citizens have stood up in protest against the actions of government, the Yasukuni Shinto Shrine is constantly being strengthened in terms of special rights conferred by the government and this has metamorphosed into a recreation of the former emperor system under a different guise.

This is seen especially in government cabinet members going to the shrine in official capacities. In 1987, the Crown Prince visited Okinawa on behalf of the Emperor whose intention was to pay his respects to those who had died in the horrors of the last war. In 1988, the Supreme Court ruling negated Ms. Yasuko Nakaya's appeal to allow full recognition

of her right to follow the dictates of her own Christian faith when her National Self-Defence Forces employed husband was enshrined in death under Shinto rites.

The National Secrets Law has often been presented to the Diet for debate in order that the State can absolutize its authority in the promotion of Japan's militarization while retaining complete control over all information.

Under these conditions will Japan's Peace Constitution be safe from revisionist pressures when the time comes for an ascension to the throne of a new emperor? Have not very dangerous power structures already been established under the sovereign authority of the emperor?

We must join hands in order to guarantee freedom and retain respect for humanity as we sensitively keep watch over the changing realities which surround us. Courage is needed in adhering to a path of continually confessing our sins against humanity as perpetrated during past wars and it is needed in carrying out all other related responsibilities.

The Japan Baptist Union has issued statements relating to the Yasukuni Shrine problem on thirteen occasions. Let us strengthen our commitment together.

August 27, 1988



My Letter to the Kawasaki Branch of the Yokohama District Court

by: Kwon Chong-

The very first time I went to apply for an alien registration certificate at the city office my fingerprints were taken. I have never forgotten the humiliation of being forced to provide my fingerprints. From that time onward, once every three years, the requirement has been that I renew my alien registration certificate and of course on those occasions also my fingerprints have been taken again and again. I had to tell myself not to worry about the fingerprint procedure, convincing myself not to think about it.

ut the humiliation stayed with me and began to pain my heart and mind. Then on an ensuing occasion of having to go to the city office I said to the officer in charge at the fingerprinting desk, "I will not give my fingerprints." I knew I was violating the law but having said that, made me feel very good. It would not be an exaggeration to say, "I feel like I have regained my humanity again."

My parents were born in Korea. They came to Japan with their families. My grandfather often said to his neighbors, when told that his grandchildren were making good grades, "They have become Japanese too quickly." My grandparents on both sides of my family died when I was twelve years old.

My father related to us our deep and abiding history, our writings, our ceramics, stories of our beautiful hometown, and stories of how all these things and more were destroyed by the invasions from Japan. He related the story of how and why they had to come to live in Japan and why our family had lost land. Our family's Korean name is Kwon and it was changed to the name Gonda after coming to Japan. His telling would always end with the words, "Remain a good Korean."

But when I went to elementary school I discovered a different aspect of my father. I was known by my first name Chong-In at home. But at school I was referred to as "Gonda Teinin" instead of Kwon Chong-In. I asked my father why at school I was called Teinin rather than Chong-In. My father said that in Japan people read the Chinese ideographs by which our names are written by their own pronunciations, and as long as we are living in Japan we must follow the Japanese way. But he again emphasized that I am Korean with the name Kwon Chong-In, and that I should not forget that fact.

My school life with a Japanese name started without any genuine answer to my question regarding different names. A good Japanese friend of mine who was with me from elementary school and on through high school was kind enough to help speak Japanese when I would lapse into speaking

some words of Korean. Upon being invited to supper at my friend's home, she said to me, "My grandmother asked me if I am scared of you, since you are Korean. So I told her, not in the least." I could not discover any answers to the question of why it should be that Japanese must feel fear in relation to Koreans, my own people.

I thought everybody knew me as a Korean. But during the elections for student council at my junior high school, I overheard my friends saying in reference to me; "Did you know she is a Korean?" Then some of them would say, "We must not allow the Korean to be elected." I wondered why all the others were not aware of my being Korean.

One day while shopping in a neighborhood store, as no other customers were around the store owner said to me, "You are always so well dressed in spite of being Korean." Or she would ask me, "You are vice-chairperson of the student council, aren't you? Can a Korean become such?"

How often have I heard people say, "Due to her being a Korean...." Or, "Even Koreans can do...." I went for counseling with my teacher regarding whether or not I should take a job instead of going to the high school, in order to help my family financially. This teacher said to me, "I don't know who will employ you, for you are a Korean." I have always been stereotyped because of my Korean ancestry and because of these stereotypes no one has been able to truly understand and accept me as I am.

When in high school it would become necessary to introduce myself in the class. I would say, "As you can see my father was a logger, but because he is of a different nationality he could not find a job." I could not directly admit to being Korean but by using the words "different nationality, everyone would come to know that I am Korean."

When my father learned of this he was very unhappy over the fact that I could not admit in public to his being Korean. It was his feeling that all his children had become excessively Japanese. I was not sure that I could find pride in being

Korean. Unless I specifically told people of my Korean background they were unable to see my true identity. As a result of these things, in my heart I had built a fence between my friends and myself and withdrew in silence.

At the time of my counseling sessions for college entrance my home-room teacher advised me to become a naturalized citizen of Japan. I was very upset by these words, and replied with great humiliation, "Are you saying that unless I become Japanese I cannot live in Japan as a Korean?" All the other teachers looked at us and my teacher said in a very reticent small voice, "Lets talk about it some other time."

In the fall of my first year in high school my fingerprints were taken because I am a foreign national. In this formal ceremony my fingerprint was taken three times. Then I was given an Alien Registration Certificate. I said, "What is this?" The officer answered, "This is a certificate of your registration. Please keep it with you at all times." What did I feel? Humiliation! No one recognized me for who I am or what I have done, but rather this little card is supposed to be proof of who I am.

Our names are negated. Our language cannot be used. Our customs and traditions are refuted. And all those around us say that Koreans are to be feared. We are insulted and humiliated because we are Koreans. The final and total negation of our selfhood is to be seen in the registration certificate which we must carry at all times in order to prove who we are.

I thought about the implications of having to keep this registration certificate in my possession at all times. It has always been my impression that my identity is a matter of relationships with others such as father, mother, friends and neighbors, not a matter to be relegated to a registration certificate. From that point on, no matter how others may see me, I decided to live as the Korean that I am. One of my friends said to me that I always seem to be in a fighting mood and with a chip on my shoulder. I don't like others to receive this kind of impression and

would rather live with kindness and in my heart.

However, how else can we live in Japan society where people have such warped understandings of Koreans? We have to carry this hated certificate of alien registration which is a symbol of repeated and deep-cutting humiliations.

I married a man of Japanese nationality and have two children who are legal persons and are Japanese nationals. My son entered an elementary school and has a good friend who is a Korean national in Japan. When both become 16 years of age they will have to be separated on the basis of the law of Japan. I wonder what they will think when the time comes.

If laws exist for purposes of maintaining peace, order and harmony in human societies, what kind of legal structure is it which separates human beings, one from the other? Ever since the first man centuries-old Japanese invasion of the Korean Peninsula, Japanese society maintained a warped view of Koreans and the laws of Japan today exist only to escalate this warped situation.

I wish that others could understand the feelings of one who, throughout her entire life, found herself to be negated over and over again and thought to be unacceptable. But when I said I would no longer allow my fingerprints to be taken, the legal system of Japan fined me 50,000 yen for disobeying the law. The fine for illegal parking, which causes infinitely greater problems for human society than those caused by my refusing to be fingerprinted, is only 7,000 yen. When it comes to the rightful questions of retaining my existence and stature as a human being, when it comes to one's own philosophy, to questions of life, selfhood and relationship, when it comes to questions of human dignity, at that point the law fines me heavily, for the non-offence of trying to be a person in my own right.

JCAN STAFF:



Munetoshi Maejima
Aiko Carter
Liann Ainsworth
Anthony Carter
Kevin Uchida